

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 INR-10

DRC-01 RSC-01 /049 W

----- 102727

R 311346Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 232

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1076

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CPRS, ZA, US

SUBJECT: CROTHERS' CASE

1. AS TWO AND A HALF MONTHS HAD ELAPSED SINCE MY LAST DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MWAANGA ON CROTHERS' CASE AND BECAUSE INTERVENING CONVERSATION BETWEEN DCM AND MOFA UNDER SECRETARY HAD BEEN INCONCLUSIVE (DCM MEMCON OF MAY 14 POUCHED AF/E BURKE), I DECIDED TO RAISE SUBJECT DURING MAY 31 CALL DEALING MAINLY WITH SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEM (SEPTTEL).

2. MWAANGA WAS LESS ADAMANT AND MORE CONCILIATORY IN TONE THAN LAST TIME, BUT HE COVERED MUCH THE SAME GROUND AS BEFORE: CABINET WAS "FIXED AND RIGID" IN ITS FAVORABLE DECISION (NOT EASILY REACHED) TO MAKE PAYMENT BUT NOT RPT NOT TO EXCEED 10,000 DOLLARS; ZAMBIA HAS ITS OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS TO DEFEND AND THESE WILL REMAIN PARAMOUNT. ONLY NEW DEVELOPMENT FROM GRZ VIEW WHICH TENDS STIFFEN ITS POSITION IS RECEIPT BY FOREIGN MINISTRY OF THREE REQUESTS FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WHO WISH INTRODUCE IN NEXT SESSION NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PETITIONS FOR COMPENSATION OF ZAMBIAN CITIZENS KILLED IN BORDER INCIDENTS. MWAANGA SAID PROBLEM OF PRECEDENTS COULD BE TROUBLESOME.

3. ADDED THAT 10,000 DOLLAR OFFER WAS MADE BY CABINET ON "TAKE-IT-OR-LEAVE-IT" BASIS AND HE HOPED USG COULD PERSUADE CROTHERS TO ACCEPT. I SAID DISTANCE VERY WIDE BETWEEN
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10,000 DOLLAR OFFER AND 40,000 DOLLAR PAYMENT CROTHERS

COULD ACCEPT AS REASONABLE FOR SETTling AND HOPEFULLY ELIMINATING ANY BITTERNESS. I INSISTED ON REAL NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF GRZ OFFER SO AS TO CLEAR BOOKS OF TROUBLESOME BILATERAL ISSUE. MWAANGA ASKED HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED. I SAID ANY FIGURE WOULD BE ARBITRARY BUT AT LEAST SOMETHING IN BETWEEN THE TWO EXTREMES (25,000 DOLLARS?) WOULD SHOW SYMPATHY FOR THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE CASE, E.G., CROTHERS HAD ONLY RECENTLY SECURED EMPLOYMENT AND WOULD PROBABLY NEED ADDITIONAL AND COSTLY MEDICAL TREATMENT.

4. MWAANGA SEEMED TO TAKE THIS TO HEART. SAID HE WOULD UNDERTAKE TO RAISE SUBJECT AGAIN IN THE FOREIGN POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CABINET AT ITS NEXT MEETING WITHIN TEN DAYS.

5. I THANKED HIM FOR THIS CONSIDERATION AND SAID I WOULD CONSULT WITH THE DEPARTMENT REGARDING WHAT IT THOUGHT MIGHT BE REASONABLE AND ACCEPTABLE IMPROVEMENT IN REPLY TO MWAANGA'S QUESTION.

6. AS SOON AS IT IS CONVENIENT TO DO SO, WILL ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN TO MARK CHONA AT STATE HOUSE NEED FOR SOME POLITICAL GIVE ON THIS ISSUE. I STRESSED TO MWAANGA AND WILL STRESS TO CHONA THAT ZAMBIAN CLAIMS AGAINST GRZ FOR LOSS OF LIFE IN BORDER INCIDENTS WERE RELATED TO HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CANADIAN ASPECT OF CASE AND THAT NO RPT NO PUBLICITY NEED NECESSARILY BE GIVEN TO CROTHERS' SETTLEMENT. SAID I WOULD RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT ATTEMPT OBTAIN FIRM UNDERSTANDING ON THIS POINT FROM CROTHERS. BELIEVE IT IMPERATIVE THAT ANY GRZ SETTLEMENT WITH CROTHERS ENJOY COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY AS PERHAPS ONLY WAY OF GAINING GRZ IMPROVEMENT IN OFFER AND EASING ITS DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LUSAKA01076
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740138-0250
From: LUSAKA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974053/aaaaacpd.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 SEP 2002 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <19 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CROTHERS' CASE
TAGS: CPRS, ZA, US, (CROTHERS, CAROL), (CROTHERS, JOHN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005